

Travel Talk tours will take you on a pilgrimage of culture, history, adventure, fun and relaxation. You will visit sites of antiquity, explore the treasures of Egypt, discover the magnificent pyramids, sphinxes; meet local people and partake numerous activities during your Egypt experience. Before you leave for your adventure, it is important that you read this pre-departure information to ensure that your trip begins, and proceeds, as smoothly as possible. While we appreciate that you are embarking on an "adventure holiday" that will produce its own share of surprises, it is also true that forewarned is forearmed. This information is not written with the intention of being anything other than general information that we hope will help you come more prepared for your holiday. The philosophy of Travel Talk is simple: to provide excellent value for money for budget conscious and adventurous travellers without compromising their experiences, and providing quality transportation, accommodation, sight seeing and information services. We hope that our philosophy will exceed your expectations and the following information will help you enjoy a memorable journey in Egypt

## INTRODUCTION

### FACTFILE

Area : 1.001.449 sq km  
(622.272 sq mi)  
Population : 79 million  
Capital City : Cairo  
Language : Arabic  
Religion : Islam 94 %  
Government : Republic  
GDP : US\$ 304 billion  
GDP per capita : US\$ 3.900  
Annual growth : 5 %  
Inflation : 4.9 %

### VISAS

Visa requirements change periodically, therefore you need to check the requirements before travelling. All visitors to Egypt are required to have a visa and a passport valid for six months. Visas can be arranged through Egyptian embassies worldwide. Visitors from the US, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Korea, Colombia and EU countries may be able to purchase a visa stamp upon arrival in Egypt. South Africans need to arrange their Egyptian visa prior to arrival. Visa fee Euro 15 and GB£ 12.

If you plan to leave Egypt and return later, or your tour makes two or more entries into the country, you need a multiple entry visa. If you apply for a multiple visa through the Egyptian embassy in your country, check your passport when it is returned to you to make sure that you have been issued the correct visa. Please also note that a multiple entry visa cannot be obtained on arrival in Egypt.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have the relevant documents/visas and Travel Talk will accept no responsibility

for being refused entry through incorrect documentation.

Please remember that you have to declare your video camera upon the entry of the country. You will also need to purchase a permit to use the video camera at the historical sights.

### DOCUMENTS

Please make sure that you have all the necessary travel documents ready before you leave your country.

#### PASSPORT

In many countries you'll be required to have a passport valid for 6 months starting from the entry date. If you are holding a passport with less than 6 months' validity or a few pages remaining, we suggest you to apply for a new one before you depart.

#### traveltalk traveltip

It's vital to take a photocopy of the important pages of your passport (pages of personal data, passport number, visas etc) and keep these copies separate from your passport.

## BEFORE YOU GO

While it's your own choice and responsibility regarding what type of clothing, belongings, luggage, bags and other items to take with you, we try to share our experiences with you to help you have a comfortable journey in Egypt.

### ESSENTIALS

Before you leave your country, we recommend you to make sure you have the followings with you :

- ✓ Passport
- ✓ Flight Ticket
- ✓ Tour voucher
- ✓ Insurance policy
- ✓ Visas (if necessary)
- ✓ Label on your travel bag
- ✓ Pre-departure information
- ✓ Money (cash and/or travellers cheques)
- ✓ Credit card

### PACKING

Please remember that the airline baggage allowance is 20 kilos and you should not pack more than you can comfortably carry.

#### traveltalk **traveltip**

When packing, the golden rule is : decide how many clothes you want to take, halve the amount and that's how much you'll need.

that you leave some space for souvenirs in your luggage. There are a wide range of fantastic things to buy in the Middle East and in Mediterranean countries, not only for your mates, also for yourself !

We have also compiled a list of things that you might need on the tour:

**Sleeping bag :** We recommend you to have light sleeping bag if you are on a felucca tour.

**Clothing :** As a general guideline, clothing should be lightweight, loose fitting, hard-wearing and easily washed. In Egypt's hot summer months, cotton clothing is much more comfortable than man-made materials like nylon. You should bear in mind that Egypt has conservative attitudes towards dress, particularly in remote areas. Make sure you allow for climate changes and remember that even in very hot countries, night-time and early morning temperatures can be extremely cold. Therefore we advise you to bring the following clothing with you : depending on the season; a warm jacket or wool sweater, a rain jacket, hiking boots, thick socks, flip-flops or waterproof sandals, shorts, light slacks (men), loose-fitting pants or long skirts (women), short sleeves, t-shirts, hat, underwear and socks. A sleeping bag will be necessary if you are joining the Felucca Safari trip in winter.

**Useful equipment :** Water bottle with strap, torch and batteries, international adapter, playing cards, walkman or mp3 player, discs.

**Toiletries :** Towels, soap, toothbrushes, talcum powder, razors, deodorant, tampons, sunscreens, contact lenses and bring enough extra pairs, solution glasses (and a copy of your prescription in case you need emergency replacements), a roll of toilet paper, hygienic wet wipes.

**First-aid kit :** Bandages, pain reliever, antibiotic cream, a thermometer, moleskin, decongestant, insect repellent, burn ointment, personal medicine.

**Others :** Converters and adapters, camera, films, flash, batteries, money belt and additional belongings that you think will be useful during your journey.

### TOUR VOUCHER

When you book a trip, you'll be provided with a tour voucher showing the details of your tour. You'll need to hand over this voucher to your tour leader to join the tour. The tour leader reserves the right to refuse serving any passenger failing to provide the tour voucher. If you have booked extra services like pre- and post tour accommodation and transfer, please make sure that these services are also shown on your tour voucher.

### FLIGHT TICKET / CONFIRMATION

Do not forget to check your name, surname, flight details and other necessary information placed on your flight ticket/confirmation voucher at least 3 days before you leave your country. It's also required to reconfirm your flight in some countries. Please contact your tour leader if you need to contact your airline to reconfirm your flight on return.

## ARRIVAL

### AIRPORT TRANSFER

The meet and greet service is included in the price of the tour.

You'll be met at Cairo Airport by our local representative. He will be holding a "Travel Talk" sign.

Please make sure that you inform your agent about your flight details (arrival date, time, flight code and flight number) to be picked up from the airport.

If you've not met at the airport (due to rescheduling your flight, delay or any other reason) please contact the emergency numbers stated below.

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Please also note that you can call the following numbers in case of **emergency** : 0020 123 13 22 08 (Cairo office) or 0090 542 779 04 34 0544 522 54 74 (head office).

### traveltalk traveltip

If you're taking a taxi to your hotel or around the city, close your ears to the common claims of taxi drivers telling newly arrived travellers that their hotel has closed down, full or poor and that they know a better hotel etc... Just insist on being taken to your hotel and once you arrive, go to the reception desk if you need further assistance.

### ARRIVAL HOTEL

Please find below the address details of your 5 Star Hotel in Cairo :

Cataract Pyramids Resort  
El Hareneya, Sakkara Road, Giza,  
Cairo, Egypt  
Tel : + 20 2 771 80 60 – 72  
Fax : + 20 2 771 80 73  
www.cataracthotels.com

### GUIDE MEETING

Please note that your guide will meet and brief you about the next days of your tour at the arrival hotel at 06:00 p.m.

### PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATION

Should you require pre- or post tour accommodation, please notify us (or your agent) at the time of booking. This information has to be also clearly stated on your voucher (check-in date, check-out date, number of travellers etc).

Unless a room is immediately available, most hotels will not allocate your room until at least mid day, it may be later than this if the hotel has had high occupancy the previous night.

Pre and post tour rates are as follows (per person per night including breakfast) :  
↻ Double or twin room GB£ 20  
↻ Single room GB£ 30

### LEFT OR LOST LUGGAGE

If you discover upon arrival that your luggage is missing, or has arrived incomplete, you should report this immediately to the information desk in the baggage hall. The staff will be able to tell you what the procedures are for reclaiming your luggage and advise you on any forms that may need to be filled in and stamped. The airport staff should also be able to explain what will happen next and when you should expect your luggage.

If you experience any problems in dealing with airport officials, your tour leader will be happy to assist you. Please remember that lost luggage is a matter between you and the airline /airport authority and the recovery of your luggage is your own responsibility and at your own expense.

## ABOUT THE TOUR

Please remember that the tour price covers specific services offered during your trip, not your entire travel cost. Your expenses will vary depending on your interest and budget and your tour leader will be always ready to inform you about the local prices and possible travel costs.

### THE TOUR PRICE AND THE LOCAL PAYMENT

We know that it's not easy to get your cash together to cover the entire travel cost, especially when you book your flight ticket and the tour at once. We ease your cash needs by dividing the tour cost into two payments : tour price and local fund. You just need to pay the tour price to purchase your travel. The compulsory local payment will be done when you join the trip. The local payment is a part of the tour cost (a tool to ease your cash need on booking date) and it does **not** cover any extra costs like meals, entry fees, drinks, tips, personal expenses or other type of travel costs.

### SERVICES INCLUDED

We run numerous tours in Egypt and the services differ depending on the type, length and character of the trips. As a general rule, the following services are included in your tour price :

#### 9 DAY TOURS

- ✓ Transfer from the airport to Travel Talk hotel and back
- ✓ Accommodation in premium hotels (combo of 5 and 4 star)
- ✓ Transportation in air-conditioned, non-smoking coaches
- ✓ Transportation in first class train (recliner seat) between Cairo-Aswan and Luxor-Cairo
- ✓ Services of experienced Egyptologist guides throughout the journey

✓Excursions as per the itinerary (entrance fees not included)

✓Donkey ride to the Valley of the Kings

✓All breakfasts at the hotels

✓2 nights Felucca accommodation on Felucca Odyssey tour including all meals during the time you spend on the felucca

✓3 nights 5 Star Nile Cruise accommodation on Jewels of the Nile tour including all meals during the time you spend on the cruise

#### 15 DAY TOURS

✓Transfer from the airport to the Travel Talk hotel and back

✓Accommodation in premium hotels (combo of 5 and 4 star)

✓Transportation in air-conditioned, non-smoking coaches or mini-buses

✓Transportation in first class overnight train (recliner seat) between Cairo-Aswan and between Luxor-Cairo

✓Night coach drive from Dahab to Cairo

✓Services of experienced Egyptologist guides

✓Excursions as per the itinerary (entrance fees not included on Explorer tours)

✓Donkey ride to the Valley of the Kings

✓All breakfasts at the hotels

✓2 nights Felucca accommodation Felucca Sailtrek and tours including all meals during the time you spend on the felucca

✓3 nights 5 star Nile Cruise accommodation on Treasures of the Nile tour including all meals during the time you spend on the cruise

✓Please note that for 16 day Egypt and Jordan Discovered tour, on the Saturday, Day 15 of the tour, it is expected that you will be back in Cairo at 20:00. It is worth noting that on the return from Jordan there is a ferry

crossing across the Red Sea, it is not uncommon for ferries to be cancelled or re scheduled by the Jordanian authorities with little or no advanced warning. With this in mind we do recommend that you leave a good margin with your departure flight out of Cairo, a flight of no earlier than 12.00 noon on the Sunday, Day 16 of the tour is advisable.

#### SERVICES NOT INCLUDED

We know that the inclusions mentioned above look fantastic, but you'll still need to bring with you satisfactory funds to cover the possible extra expenses. The tour price does not cover the followings :

Any flights, insurance, meals not stated in the itinerary (all lunches and dinners), drinks, items of a personal nature, tips, visa fees, entrance fees to the sights and museums, other services not stated in the "services included" section, optional activities and excursions.

#### BORDER TAXES

There are no border taxes (entry or exit taxes) when entering or leaving Egypt by air. However if you've purchased a combined tour of Egypt and Jordan, there will be a departure tax of US\$ 10.00 when leaving Egypt. If you've not obtained visa for Jordan before your trip, this can be obtained in Aqaba, Jordan. Please contact us for the latest information as these fees may change periodically.

#### ENTRANCE FEES

The entry fees to museums and sights are not included in the tour price. Please bear in mind that the entry fees change periodically and we recommend

you to contact us for the latest prices (1 US\$ is about Egyptian £6):

Giza Pyramids E£ 60

Sphinx Free

Sakkara E£ 60

Philae Temple E£ 50

Unfinished Obelisk E£ 30

High Dam E£ 20

Komombo E£ 30

Edfu Temple E£ 50

Karnak Temple E£ 65

Luxor Temple E£ 50

Colossi of Memnon Free

Valley of the Kings E£ 80

Valley of the Queens E£ 25

Hatchepsut E£ 30

Egyptian Museum E£ 60

Citadel E£ 50

St. Catherine E£ 20

#### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Egypt is one of the best adventure destinations in the world offering numerous optional activities and excursions. There are plenty of good opportunities for swimming on the many fine beaches along Egypt's Mediterranean and Red Sea coasts. Diving and snorkelling are by far the most popular organised activities in Egypt, and the Red Sea is said to have some of the best scuba diving in the world. The waters of Egypt teem with underwater life and the corals, crustaceans and fish come in all sorts of vivid colours and shapes. Camel and jeep safaris are also popular, either in the Western Desert with its fantastic sand landscapes or in the rugged, rocky surrounds of Sinai.

Depending on the tour you've booked, you can join the optional activities stated below :

✓Dinner at the Nubian village in Aswan 120 EGP

✓Abu Simbel tour from Aswan 485 EGP

✓Hot-air ballooning in Luxor 650 EGP

✓Nile Cruise Dinner 130 EGP

These prices are approximate. Please approach to your tour leader for the current prices and the details of the above activities.

#### OTHER

Please refer to "Money & Exchange", "Eating & Drinking", "Shopping" and "Tipping" sections for other possible expenses during your journey.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is recommended to all passengers travelling on Travel Talk tours to have personal insurance to cover all medical and repatriation costs. Please do not forget to take your insurance policy with you.

While there are no mandatory vaccinations for travellers to Egypt it is advisable to ensure typhoid, polio and tetanus inoculations are up to date. Some travellers feel more confident with hepatitis and meningitis inoculations as well.

Rabies exists in Egypt in rural areas although it is very unlikely that you will come in contact with a rabid animal. Immunisation is available in either a series of three injections over a period of one month (lasts 3-5 years) or a single visit booster dose that lasts only 6-12 months. Please consult a medical practitioner for advice.

Bottled water is readily available throughout your tour and we recommend that you purchase this rather than drink the local tap water. While the local water is usually heavily chlorinated and safe many people find they get upset stomachs after drinking these supplies.

#### traveltalk traveltip

It is advisable to carry some Imodium with you in case you get an upset stomach from the difference in cuisine. The different spices and foods may be a little upsetting to your stomach and it is best to be prepared... just in case.

It is often difficult to find the precise medication that is available in one's home country and for this reason we recommend that you carry all current medication with you.

#### traveltalk traveltip

Toilet paper is rarely provided so it is a good idea to carry a spare roll in your bag. It should be placed in the basket beside the toilet, not flushed away, as you might block the pipes.

Most people find that Egypt is a friendly and hospitable country and feel quite comfortable wandering around alone during the day. However, as with any country you are not familiar with, it is recommended that you exercise more caution at night and generally take taxis rather than walk.

It is wise not to accept gifts of food or drink from any strangers for the risk of possibly being a victim of theft by drugging. Take care with your passport, credit cards and money - a money belt to fit beneath your clothes is highly recommended. It is also recommended that at least one set of modest clothing is taken with you. It is a sign of respect to cover your shoulders and legs when visiting mosques and also attracts less unwanted attention. A headscarf for women is necessary when visiting mosques in Egypt.

## MONEY

The local currency is Egyptian Pound (1 eu is about Egyptian £8,00 and 9 gbp). Most towns in Egypt have ATMs that are linked

into major international networks. Travel cheques are also one of the safest means of carrying funds, as they are widely accepted.

Credit cards (Visa and MasterCard are the most recognised) are accepted in the most tourist areas, but if you are travelling off the beaten track, be prepared to use other forms of payment. It is difficult to specify the amount of money that you can spend per day, however as a general rule 15 to 20 Euros or GB £13 to £18 per day can provide you with additional meals and entrance fees.

Should you wish to purchase souvenirs, of which there is a diverse range, or participate in optional activities, you will have to budget for these.

Please do not bring Scottish banknotes as they are not changable abroad.

## EATING & DRINKING

Like any crossroads culture, Egyptian cuisine has picked and chosen those ingredients and food that grow best as well as best meet the flavor and nutritional needs of their people. Bridging Africa and Asia as it does, Egypt has a lot from which to choose.

The shish kebab style is extremely popular and is served either with or without the skewers but always with traditional accompaniments: greens and tomato salad, tahini sauce and pita bread. So you can stuff your own sandwich if you want. Bread is always whole wheat pita, coated with coarse ground wheat, round, fragrant and sheer heaven when hot from the oven. Often pita plus a dipping sauce, tahini, hummus or babaganoush, makes a fast food meal and a healthy, delicious one at that.

The traditional and ubiquitous salad is chopped tomato, coriander, mint, little hot green peppers (not jalapenos but close) and onions, coated with garlic oil. It's great for digestion but death

on the breath. Bring mints. Other veggies that grow well and show up all the time include beans, mostly chick pea and fava, which are eaten stewed for breakfast, hearty stewed for lunch and dinner and ground and pasted for tahini and hummus with great amounts of garlic. Eggplant, mashed as the main ingredient in babaganoush, is also used in Egyptian moussaka with a mild white cheese. Okra, cabbage, cauliflower and potatoes show up frequently, stewed with tomatoes and garlic. Rice is a universal constant and is consistently wonderful, even for breakfast! The grains mix short basmati-like rice with longer brown and nutty tasting rice.

Grilled pigeon is the acclaimed delicacy and like any small game bird is long on flavor but short on ease of eating. You can taste fish on the Red Sea, i.e. perch and tuna, both fried, but flavorful without excess oil.

Of course, when you think "Orient" you think spices. Egyptian bazaars display staggering amounts, sculptured into colorful spice pyramids, from yellows of saffron and ochres of curries to deep blues of powdered indigo dye. Food is usually spiced but not spicy. Cumin and salt are found on restaurant tables.

Middle Eastern desserts are nothing special; they do bake but, to the Western taste, figs, date and nut fillings in largely unsweetened dough isn't a dessert. Better to eat the fresh figs, dates (of which there must be 200 different types and grades), oranges and pomegranates without baked modifications. Speaking of fruit, juice bars abound in the streets and fresh squeezed oranges sweetened with cut sugar cane is heaven in a hot climate. Although Egypt is a Muslim country,

most of the hotels serve alcoholic drinks (during Ramadan, some hotels will close their bars). Locally produced spirits and wine are OK, and the local beer "Stella" is quite good.

Although Egyptian eating habits may seem erratic, most natives begin the day with a light breakfast of beans (or bean cakes), eggs, and/or pickles, cheeses, and jams. Most families eat their large, starchy lunch around 14.00-17.00 hrs and follow it with a siesta. They may take a British-style tea at 17.00 or 18.00 hrs and eat a light supper (often leftovers from lunch) late in the evening. Dinner parties, however, are scheduled late, often no earlier than 21.00 hrs, with the meal served an hour or two later. In restaurants lunch is normally 13.00-16.00, dinner 20.00-24.00 hrs.

The following prices will give you a brief idea about the food and beverage expenses during your journey : A basic lunch and dinner (main meal + salad) in a local restaurant will cost you between £5 and £7 (US \$10 and US \$14), a soft drink about £ 1.00 (US \$2.00). The beer prices differ depending on the region (town) and the atmosphere of the bar-pub-restaurant etc. A bottle of beer will cost you around £2.00 (US\$4.00) and bottle of wine will cost approx. £ 6 (US\$ 12) in a backpacker pub and bar.

## SHOPPING

Egypt offers an incredible selection of shopping. Shopping ranges from the famous Khan el-Khalili Bazaar largely unchanged since the 14th century, to modern air-conditioned centers displaying the latest fashions. All the bounty of the East is here - particularly good buys are spices, perfumes, gold, silver, carpets, brass and copperware, leatherwork, glass, ceramics and mashrabiya. You can also try some of the famous street markets, like Wekala al-Balaq, for fabrics, including Egyptian

cotton, the Tentmakers Bazaar for appliqué-work, Mohammed Ali Street for musical instruments and, although you probably won't want to buy, the Camel Market makes a fascinating trip.

Cokes, batteries, water and similar items can usually be purchased much cheaper in supermarkets. But of course, many items which the travellers will wish to purchase such as gold cartouches, Egyptian theme clothing or t-shirts and statues replicas are souvenirs by definition and must be purchased, for the most part, from a market that caters to tourists.

A considerable aptitude for negotiation will unquestionably result in lower prices in areas which cater to tourists, such as the Khan and tourist shops around the pyramids and old or Coptic Cairo. Most everywhere else such as grocery stores, shopping malls and the shopping area downtown, prices are fixed, and not really negotiable at all. In some of the shops, one might make a friendly effort to secure a small discount, but a strong attempt at negotiation will probably offend the sales person.

### traveltalk traveltip

You need to bear in mind that haggling is a way of life in the Middle East. Haggling should always be relaxed and can be a lot of fun - you will find most shop owners are very friendly and will probably invite you in for a cup of tea to break the ice before the haggling starts.

## OPENING HOURS

Normally shops and department stores are open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. with possible variations from town to town (except for the Ramadan period). Banks in Egypt are open Sunday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and they are closed on Friday and Saturday. Post Offices are open from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. They are closed on Friday.

## TIPPING

Tipping is a way of life in Egypt. It is not a "reward" and should not really be called a tip. In Arabic, it is called "baksheesh" and it is part of the traditional payment structure for services, whether they are good or bad. Everyone tips everyone else. You should budget for this around US\$ 4-5 per day. Your bus driver, felucca staff and guide may also be honoured with such a traditional appreciation.

## WEATHER

Egyptian summers are hot and dry in most of the country and humid in the Delta and along the Mediterranean Coast. In recent years the humidity has spread to Cairo and the city swelters in August. Winters are mild with some rain, but usually there are bright, sunny days and cold nights.

There is a short spring and autumn and during the 50 days (khamseen) between the end of March and mid-May, dust storms can occur sporadically.

If you are travelling between November and March on a tour that includes trekking in the Sinai or cruising on the Nile you should expect temperatures to fall considerably at night. At this time of year temperatures can often fall below freezing near Mt. Sinai.

## TEMPERATURES

	January		April		July		October	
Region	C	F	C	F	C	F	C	F
Cairo	18	64	28	82	36	97	30	86
Aswan	23	73	36	97	41	106	37	99
Luxor	23	73	35	95	40	104	35	95
Red Sea	24	75	31	88	40	104	32	90

## ELECTRICITY

All appliances require a double round pin type plug for 220 volts AC, 50-hertz.

## DISTANCES

The following information will give you an idea of the times travelled to help you plan your day:

Cairo-Aswan : 982 kms, 12 hrs  
 Aswan-Luxor : 247 kms, 3 hrs  
 Aswan-Abu Simbel : 309 kms, 3.5 hrs  
 Luxor-Cairo : 735 kms, 9 hrs  
 Dahab-St.Catherine : 180 kms, 1.5 hrs  
 St.Catherine-Cairo : 390 kms, 4.5 hrs

## ACCOMMODATION

Please bear in mind that star ratings utilized in the Middle East are not directly comparable with the European standards. The hotel selection in Egypt is 5, 4 and 3 star locally rated and the main criteria in the hotel selection process is cleanliness, private bathroom facilities, usually but not always air-conditioning and central location.

If you are travelling on your own, you'll be allocated a twin or triple room with other group members of the same gender.

Travellers who have paid a single supplement will stay in single rooms, however we can not guarantee the availability of double beds for couple travellers.

Your Tour Leader will organise the rooming arrangements when checking into the hotels according to the rooming lists sent by the operation department. Therefore we can also not guarantee any last minute changes to suit personal requirements of our passengers.

## NILE CRUISE BOAT

We use 5 star Nile cruise boats on Jewels of the Nile and Treasures of the Nile tours.

On the Nile Cruise boat, there is ample deck space, a large sundeck and a spacious shaded seating area with its own bar, and the best views of the majestic Nile. Meals are served in the air-conditioned restaurant and there is a lounge bar where you can enjoy your evening listening to music or playing cards and backgammon. The air-conditioned twin-bedded cabins each have a private en-suite shower, toilet and washbasin – as well as a large window offering a panoramic view of the river.

Although the meals are also included in the tour price, the drinks are sold extra. Please remember that the beverage prices on the cruise boat can be higher than the usual Egyptian restaurants & bars.

## FELUCCA BOAT

Feluccas are traditional sailing boats that have been used on the Nile for centuries.

They are simple sailing boats, no more and no less. They have no engines and no toilets. There is a single deck on which you can stretch out during the day under a shade awning.

Each felucca sleeps 6-8 people and is crewed by a captain and a deck hand – both of whom have grown up along the banks of the Nile. As well as being experienced Nile sailors they also make the most delicious meals out of simple local ingredients – you may sit down to a lunch of local bread, white cheese, hummus and delicious fresh juicy tomatoes or a dinner of pasta and mixed vegetables with delicious tomato sauce.

The deck is covered with mattresses and cushions and you will sleep sardine style across the boat, however a light sleeping bag will be necessary if you are joining the felucca cruise trip in winter.

In the summer months (March to October) you may like to bring a sleeping sheet as well to use instead of your sleeping bag if the nights are warmer. You will also need to provide your own towel during the cruise.

## FERRY TO JORDAN

We aim to use private ferries from Egypt to Jordan (or reverse) when the number of the tour participants is big enough. If not, we'll be using the ferry of the local transportation company. Please remember that these ferries are subject to delay for hours without any prior notice from the local transportation company which may effect the schedule of the tour program. Such delays are out of Travel Talk's control and also valid for other tour operators running combined tours in Egypt and Jordan.

## MT. SINAI

Ascending Mt. Sinai is an unforgettable experience for every traveller and the main attraction is witnessing the spectacular sunrise. Therefore an early start (at around 1:30 a.m.) will continue with a tiring uphill walk along a camel path and a trek of 750 stone steps. The climb will take around 3 hours although it's possible to take a camel up to a specific point of the mountain. There are also teahouses dotted along the way and one at the top of the mountain.

### traveltalk **traveltip**

When ascending Mt. Sinai, it's recommended to dress according to the weather conditions (as it can be cold in specific periods of the year) and to bring a torch with you.

Please contact your tour leader for detailed information.

## RAMADAN

Ramadan is the most important religious event for Muslims lasting for one month. Around one billion Muslims do not eat and drink from sunrise to sunset which may also effect the usual travel habits of travellers from all over the world. During Ramadan many cafes, restaurants, shops, bazaars and other services may be closed during the day or have limited opening hours. Your tour leader (who will be probably fasting too) will advise you of any changes and will assist you in making plans for your free time.

In 2010 Ramadan is set to begin on 11 August until 9 September.

## LANGUAGE

Egyptian language is Arabic. Below you'll find some important phrases that will make your travel easier :

Hello	Selaam
Goodbye	Ma Salama
Yes	Aiwa
No	La
Please	Minfudluk
Thank you	Shokran
Excuse me	Lao Samaht
How are you ?	E-zayak
I'm well, thank you	El Humdoolelaa
How much is it ?	Bekam ?
Too much !	Ketir !
I don't understand	Ana mish fahem
Water	Maya
Coffee	Ahwa
Tea	Shy
The bill	El Hesab

## BRIEF INFO ABOUT THE SIGHTS

Before you explore the fantastic sights of this unique country, we hope that the below information will give you basic idea about the sites you'll visit.

## Cairo

The heart of Egypt for more than 1000 years, Cairo demonstrates the dichotomy of all things Egyptian. It's in Cairo where the medieval world and the contemporary western world come together in a confusion of earthen houses and towering modern office buildings, of flashy cars and donkey-drawn carts. Nobody really knows how many people live in Cairo, but estimates put it at about 16 million, and the city's many squatter camps and slums alone accommodate around 5 million people. Housing shortages are terrible and the traffic is appalling, but the government has begun a campaign to ease these pressures, opening an underground metro system and constructing satellite suburbs.

Islamic Cairo (which is no more Islamic than the rest of the city) is the old medieval quarter, and stepping into its neighbourhoods is like moving back six or seven centuries. This is the most densely populated area of Egypt, and probably the whole Middle East. Districts like Darb al-Ahmar are full of tiny alleyways, mud-brick houses, food hawkers, and goats, camels and donkeys. The streets are lined with mosques and temples, and the air is filled with the pungent smells of turmeric and cumin, animals and squalor. Some of Islamic Cairo's highlights include the Mosque of Ibn Tulun, dating from the 9th century and the city's oldest intact and fully functioning Islamic monument; the 15th-century Mosque of Qaitbey, considered the jewel of Mamluk architecture; Al-Azhar Mosque, the keystone of Islam in Egypt; and the

Citadel, an awesome medieval fortress that was the seat of Egyptian power for 700 years. The Citadel has three major mosques and several museums.

**Coptic Cairo** was originally built as a Roman fortress town. Pre-dating the founding of Islamic Cairo by several hundred years, it was home to one of the world's first Christian communities and is also a holy place for Jews and Muslims. The sole remaining section of the **Fortress of Babylon** includes two towers which were built in AD 98 and originally overlooked an important port on the Nile before the river changed course. The **Coptic Museum** at the foot of the towers explores Egypt's Christian era from the years 300 to 1000. The stunning collection includes religious and secular art, stonework, manuscripts, woodwork, glass and ceramics.

**Giza** is on the west bank of the Nile and takes in an 18km (11mi) swathe that includes the **Great Pyramids**. The pyramids were one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, they are still a truly overwhelming sight. They have survived the rise and fall of great dynasties and conquerors, and share the flat desert surrounds with the Sphinx and a number of smaller pyramids and temples.

### Pyramids

How the Great Pyramid was built is a question that may never be answered. Herodotus said that it would have taken 30 years and 100,000 slaves to have built it. Another theory is that it was built by peasants who were unable to work the land while the Nile flooded between July and November. They may have been paid with food for their labor. The flooded waters would have also aided in the moving of the casing

stones. These stones were brought from Aswan and Tura and the water would have brought the stones right to the pyramid. This pyramid is thought to have been built between 2589 - 2566 BC. It would have taken over 2,300,000 blocks of stone with an average weight of 2.5 tons each. The total weight would have been 6,000,000 tons and a height of 482 feet (140m). It is the largest and the oldest of the Pyramids of Giza.

### Cheops

Not much is known about Cheops. The tomb had been robbed long before archeologists came upon it. Any information about him was taken with the objects inside the tomb. He is thought to have been the ruler of a highly structured society and he must have been very wealthy. He was buried alone in this massive tomb. His wives may have been buried nearby in smaller mastabas.

### Chephren

On its southwest diagonal is the (Chephren, Khafre). Although it is smaller, a steeper angle results in the illusion that they are the same size. In fact, Kephren's pyramid appears taller since it is on higher ground. The notion that this was done on purpose to out-do his father is without question. As it occupies the central point, has the illusion of greater size, and still has some of its casing stones intact, it is frequently misreferred to as the Great Pyramid, something that would no doubt please Khephren were he to know about it.

In a depression to the south of Chephren's pyramid sits a creature with a human head and a lion's body.

The name 'sphinx' which means 'strangler' was first given by the Greeks to a fabulous creature which had the head of a woman and the body of a lion and the wings of a bird. The sphinx appears to have started in Egypt in the form of a sun god. The Egyptian sphinx is usually a head of a king wearing his

headdress and the body of a lion. There are, however, sphinxes with ram heads that are associated with the god Amun.

Across the Great Court of the Pyramid Complex of (Zoser) (2667 - 2648 BC), the second king of the 3rd Dynasty, stands the , located at close to modern day . It is believed to have been created by one man, . He has been called Doctor, Sage, Architect, Astronomer and High Priest. During an excavation in 1924-26, a pedestal of a statue of Djoser (Zoser) was found. This complex represents the first major work in stone. On the Pyramid, most of the outer casing is gone. In some places the core masonry has disappeared as well. It is obvious there were different stages of construction.

### Citadel of Saladin

One of Cairo's most popular tourist attractions is the Citadel, located on a spur of limestone that had been detached from its parent Moqattam Hills by quarrying. The Citadel is one of the world's greatest monuments to medieval warfare, as well as a highly visible landmark on Cairo's eastern skyline. Particularly when viewed from the back side (from the north), the Citadel reveals a very medieval character.

### Mohammad Ali (Alabaster Mosque)

Designed by the Greek architect Yussuf Bushnaq, The Mohammad Ali (Alabaster) Mosque in the Citadel was begun in 1830 (finished in 1857) in the Ottoman style by Mohammad Ali Pasha, ruler of Egypt, and founder of the country's last dynasty of Khedives and Kings. The mosque is the Tomb of Mohammad Ali and is also known as the Alabaster Mosque because of the extensive use of this fine material from Beni Suef. Its two slender 270 foot minarets are unusual for Cairo. From the arcaded courtyard, visitors have a magnificent view across the

## Aswan

Aswan, Egypt's southernmost city, has long been the country's gateway to Africa. The prosperous market city straddles the crossroads of the ancient caravan routes, at the 'other' end of the Nile not far above the Tropic of Cancer. In ancient times it was a garrison town known as **Swenet** (meaning 'Trade'), and it was also important to the early Coptic Christians. The main town and temple area of Swenet were located on **Elephantine Island** in the middle of Nile (the island was known then as Yebu, and later renamed by the Greeks). The temples and ruins here are not nearly as well preserved and impressive as those elsewhere in the country, but there are other good reasons to visit. If you're not 'tombing out', a visit to the **Tombs of the Nobles** is worthwhile, and a highlight is the **Nubian Museum**, showcasing history, art and Nubian culture from the prehistoric to the present. The Nile is glorious here as it makes its way down from massive **High Dam** and **Lake Nasser** - watching the feluccas glide by as the sun sets over the Nile is an experience you're unlikely to forget.

The world famous High Dam was an engineering miracle when it was built in the 1960s. It contains 18 times the material used in the Great Pyramid of Cheops. The Dam is 11,811 feet long, 3215 feet thick at the base and 364 feet tall. Today it provides irrigation and electricity for the whole of Egypt and, together with the old Aswan Dam built by the British between 1898 and 1902, 6km down river, wonderful views for visitors. From the top of the two Mile long High Dam you can gaze across Lake Nassar, the huge reservoir created when it was built, to Kalabsha temple in the south and the huge power station to the north.

The island of Philae, measuring 500 yards from north to south and 160 yards from east to west was the center of the cult of the goddess Isis and her connection with

Osiris, Horus, and the Kingship, during the Ptolemaic period of Egyptian History. It is almost covered with temples, courts and ancient constructions of one kind or other; and the banks of the river are largely built up with quay-walls and high terraces. Before the Aswan Dam was built, the temples and structures on Philae were flooded each year from December to about April, and had to be visited during this time by boat, passing through the Kiosk of Trajan and into the court of the Temple of Isis. In the 1970s, the architectural structures of the original island were moved to their present position on the island of Agilkia, to the northwest, when Philae was going to be flooded by the construction of the Aswan High Dam. The new location was carefully landscaped to make it resemble Philae as much as possible.

## Luxor

Built on the site of the ancient city of Thebes, Luxor is one of Egypt's prime tourist destinations. People have been visiting the magnificent monuments of Luxor, Karnak, Hatshepsut and Ramses III for thousands of years.

Luxor Temple was built by Pharaoh Amenhotep III (1390-1352 BC) on the site of an older temple built by Hatshepsut and added to by Tutankhamun, Ramses II, Nectanebo, Alexander the Great and various Romans. Excavation work has been under way since 1885. The Temples of Karnak are a spectacular series of monuments that were the main place of worship in Theban times. They can be divided into the Amun Temple Enclosure, which is the largest; the Mut Temple Enclosure on the south side; and the Montu Temple Enclosure. The lonely statues of the Colossi of Memnon are the first things most people see when they arrive on the West bank, though the Valley of the Kings, including the spectacular tombs of Nefertari and Tutankhamun, are the big attraction.

city to the pyramids in Giza. Just off the courtyard is the vast prayer hall with an Ottoman style dome which is 170 feet above. The parapet to the southwest offers a good view of the Sultan Hassan and Ibn Tulun Mosques and of Cairo itself. Perhaps because of its location, it is one of the most frequented Mosques by tourists.

### The Hanging Church

The Hanging Church (El Muallaqa, Sitt Mariam, St Mary) derives its name from its location on top of the southern tower gate of the old with its nave suspended above the passage (Muallaqa translates to 'suspended'). It is the most famous Coptic in , as well as the first built in Basilican style (possibly). It was probably built during the patriarchate of Isaac (690-92), though an earlier church building may have existed elsewhere dating as early as the 3rd or 4th century. By the 11th century AD, it became the official residence of the Coptic patriarchs of Alexandria. The church, which measures 23.5 meters long, 18.5 meters wide and 9.5 meters high, can be reached by steps 29 steps. It became known to travelers during the 14th and 15th centuries as the "staircase church" because of these steps, which in turn lead to an open court. The entrance to the church lies in the south door in the east wall of the narthex, which an outer porch decorated with geometric and floral designs in relief applied to stucco.

### Temple of Hatshepsut

The mortuary temple of is one of the most dramatically situated in the world. The queen's architect, Senenmut, designed it and set it at the head of a valley overshadowed by the Peak of the Thebes, the "Lover of Silence," where lived the goddess who presided over the necropolis. A tree lined avenue of sphinxes led up to the temple, and ramps led from terrace to terrace. The porticoes on the lowest terrace are out of proportion and coloring with the rest of the building. They were restored in 1906 to protect the celebrated reliefs depicting the transport of obelisks by barge to Karnak and the miraculous birth of Queen Hatshepsut.

### Valley of the Kings

From Thutmose I in the 18th Dynasty of the New Kingdom period, all the kings, and occasionally high officials of that period, were buried in the secluded wadi, or dry gully, which today is called Valley of the Kings.

The Valley, known as Biban el-Muluk, "doorway or gateway of the kings," or the Wadyein, meaning "the two valleys," is actually composed of two separate branches. The main eastern branch, called "The Great Place," is where most of the royal tombs are located, and in the larger, westerly branch where only a few tombs were cut. The Valley is hidden from sight, behind the cliffs, which form the backdrop to the temple complex of Deir el-Bahri. Though the most direct

route to the valley is a rather steep climb over these cliffs, a much longer, shallower, route existed along the bottom of the valley. This was quite possibly used by funeral processions, pulling funeral equipment by sledges to the rock-cut tombs in the Valley.

### Karnak

Karnak describes a vast conglomerate of ruined temples, chapels and other buildings of various dates. The name Karnak comes from the nearby village of el-Karnak. Karnak was ancient *Ipet-isut*, perhaps the most select of Places. Theban kings and the god came to prominence at the beginning of the . From that time, the temples of Karnak were built, enlarged, torn down, added to, and restored for more than 2000 years.

The Temple of Karnak is actually three main temples, smaller enclosed temples, and several outer temples. This vast complex was built and enlarged over a thirteen hundred year period. The three main temples of , and are enclosed by enormous brick walls. The is located to the north of the first courtyard, across from the The main complex, is situated in the center of the entire complex. The is to the north of the Temple of Amun, while the is to the south. There is also the small .

### Dahab

Dahab is 85km (53mi) north of Sharm al-Sheikh on the Gulf of Aqaba, near the southern tip of Sinai. Dahab was once a sleepy backwater, but these days there are more pot-smoking travellers than Bedouins, and the town has become something of a lazy layover.

This pearl of the gulf actually consists of two villages, the Bedouin village of Assalah is the southern half, with the business and administrative center of Dahab to the north.

Dahab means 'gold' sand and wonderful snorkeling opportunities. Dahab has excellent in Arabic. In Sinai it means golden sands, turquoise sea and off-beat cafe life. It is a focus of tourism development, with swaying palms, fine hotel accommodations, but also affords less expensive housing in the village, or camping.

About 5 miles from town is the famous Blue Hole, for diving. Towards the Israeli border is the Island of Coral, where the Crusaders built a fort. The remains can still be seen.

### St. Catherine's Monastery

Located at the foot of Mount Moses, St. Catherine's Monastery, was constructed by order of the Emperor Justinian between 527 and 565. It is a spectacular natural setting for priceless works of art, including Arab mosaics, Greek and Russian icons, Western oil paintings, paintings on wax, fine sacerdotal ornaments, marbles, enamels, chalices, reliquaries, including one donated by Czar Alexander II in the 19th century, and another by Empress Catherine of Russia in the 17th century.

## ■ Mt. Sinai

After 8,000 years at the heart of history, experience the continuing contrasts. Sinai is where rock meets coral reef and the desert stops at the sea. It is the grandeur of granite meeting golden beaches. Here, you will find tropical fish and rare birds, spectacular sunsets and clear starry nights. Meet Sinai and discover yourself.

There is still speculation about which mountain exactly is Mount Sinai. Mount Moses, with ancient St. Catherine's Monastery located at its foot, is traditionally considered to be the peak that Moses climbed.

ENJOY YOUR ADVENTURE !

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